The CM-ECF Support Team provides a help line to assist electronic filers in the Western District of Washington. This service is available Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 5 PM. We can help filers with online "events" and answer questions regarding formatting documents, training, etc. To contact us, call:

ECF Help Desk

1-866-323-9293   or

206-370-8440

Training Classes

In the Seattle courthouse:
700 Stewart Street, Seattle

Thursday, February 2nd 1 - 3 PM
Tuesday, February 28th 10 - 12 PM
Tuesday, March 22nd, 1 - 3 PM

In the Tacoma courthouse:
1717 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma

Classes arranged on request.

Everything You Wanted to Know About PDF

The ECF Help Desk receives many calls from filers who wonder why they need to convert their documents to PDF files. In this issue we want to answer your questions regarding this common format.

What is a PDF?
PDF stands for portable document format. Developed by Adobe Systems, this type of electronic document can be viewed on either a PC or a Mac. And on any operating system. For example, a PC user running Microsoft Windows can create a PDF that can be viewed on a Mac using a Mac operating system. And vice versa.

> **No system maintenance planned**
>
> **Always check the CM-ECF website for notices of any emergency maintenance!**

What is Adobe Acrobat Reader?
Adobe Reader is freeware that is available from Adobe. You must download this program to your computer to view PDFs that have been filed electronically. **Please note that Adobe Acrobat Reader will NOT convert your document from a Word or Word Perfect file to a PDF file. For that you MUST purchase special software.**

How can I convert my documents?
We recommend converting your Word or Word Perfect documents directly to PDF format. If you have Word Perfect, you can do this without purchasing additional software. If you do not, you can refer to the web sites listed on the next page. Compare features and prices, as they vary greatly.

In addition, you can create PDF files using a scanner. This method is sometimes necessary when filing exhibits or pages signed by someone other than the person filing the document. Note that some scanners do not include the necessary software to do this. Therefore, if you are buying a scanner specifically for this purpose, be sure that it is capable of creating PDFs.

Finally, online services and copy centers can create PDF files on request.

The ECF Help Desk can point you to web sites that will help you make informed decisions regarding what conversion program is right for you. Although we cannot recommend programs, we can answer basic questions on how to convert your documents to PDF. Call if you need help.

Q&A

Can I include hyperlinks in my document?

To be on the safe side, don't include hyperlinks in your document.

Hyperlinks often cause the error message shown at the top of this issue's Tips and Tricks. And you may not even be aware that you created them in your original document.

Why do links often cause problems? Links add information to the document that you do not see unless you know where to look for it. This information can direct your computer to launch the preferred browser and then go to a specified site. Internal links (links referring to other places in the same document) act in much the same way. Both add extra code that you do not see. When you convert this document to a PDF file, this code is carried over.

For instructions on how to eliminate links in a word processing document, see Tips and Tricks in this issue.

Tips and Tricks

Error: Document contains code which may cause an external action...

PDF documents can contain small bits of code that can launch another application. When you try to file, a message appears telling you that there is an error. To correct the error, you must recognize these embedded bits of code. And, once you detect them, you can easily clean up your PDF.

Nine times out of ten, hyperlinks are the culprit. To find them in a PDF file, look for underlined text. (See the word "Adobe" on page one.) In most **word programs,** they are underlined AND the text is blue.

You can always return to your word processing document and turn off the auto formatting option. This feature creates links as soon as you type www. OR, you can locate the hyperlinks. Then, for each link do the following: **delete the text, re-type it, and immediately after enter** Ctrl-Z **to remove the auto formatting**. You will know that you have eliminated the hyperlink because the blue, underlined text will be plain again. **Finally, convert your document once more to a PDF.**

Understand Your PDF Conversion Options

Here are a few web sites that contain useful information regarding PDF conversion. Some offer limited free trials of software. We recommend trying different types prior to making a financial commitment. Some are quite easy to use. Others more complicated, with advanced features that you may not need. Usually the more complicated programs are the most expensive. Try out a few prior to making your decision. AND prior to filing!

- **www.adobe.com** — Many conversion options ranging from the full Adobe Acrobat suite to an online service for pdf conversion. Also where you can obtain Acrobat Reader, required for viewing filed docs. Acrobat Reader is freeware; the conversion software is not.
- **www.macromedia.com** — Home of Flashpaper software, that easily converts documents to either PDF or "Flashpaper." ONLY PDF DOCUMENTS CAN BE E-FILED. Free trial software.
- **www.pdfzone.com** — Articles, tips, and the latest news about pdf. See the buyer's guide for comparison of conversion software, including links for free trials software.
- **www.planetpdf.com** — "Home of the PDF Community." Search engine in the upper menu bar to find PDF software, including free trial software.
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